

NEWS FROM Legislator

# Lou D'Amaro



SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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## Legislator D'Amaro Urges Local Residents To Report Dead Bird Sightings and Dump Stagnant Water

(HUNTINGTON STATION... September 14, 2011) – West Nile virus, a mosquito-borne infection that can cause encephalitis and other serious and potentially fatal health problems, has again been found in the area this year after positive tests on mosquito sample pools in Babylon and Huntington. That is why Suffolk Legislator Lou D'Amaro (D-Huntington Station) is urging local residents to call the Department of Health Services' Public Health Hotline at (631) 787-2200, Monday through Friday between 9 am – 4 pm if they spot dead birds in the community. Messages may also be left on the phone during non-business hours.

Birds that are prone to being bit by infected mosquitoes include crows, blue jays, hawks, falcons, owls, exotic or unusual bird species. If a resident spots a dead bird of that kind, or peculiar circumstances such as die-offs of multiple birds, they are urged to take action from a safe distance by calling in the sighting.

“If residents spot a dead bird near their home that has been there less than 24 hours and shows no sign of other trauma, they should immediately report the location to the County,” D'Amaro said. “The Suffolk County Department of Health Services will be able to identify over the phone

(more)

if it is a bird that requires testing. If the Department determines that testing is not needed, they will provide residents with instructions for safe removal," D'Amaro said.

In addition to keeping a look out for dead birds, D'Amaro also reminds homeowners to dump stagnant pools of water on their property that may become breeding grounds for infected mosquitoes.

West Nile virus was first detected in Suffolk County in 1999. While not everyone who is bit by an infected mosquito will develop the virus, it is a very serious and potentially fatal disease. It is estimated that 20 percent of those who become infected will develop some form of West Nile Fever. Mild symptoms include fever, headache, body aches and occasionally a skin rash and swollen lymph glands. The virus can also lead to West Nile encephalitis or meningitis with severe symptoms including high fever, muscle weakness, stupor and disorientation.

"We want everyone to stay safe and healthy," D'Amaro said. "By being on the lookout for potentially disease-carrying birds, and making sure that properties are clear of stagnant pools of water, residents can protect themselves and confidently enjoy the outdoors in the coming months."

For further information on West Nile virus, visit the Department of Health Services' web site at [www.suffolkcountyny.gov/health](http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/health) or call (631) 853-3055.

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Suffolk County Legislator Lou D'Amaro (D-Huntington Station) represents the 17<sup>th</sup> Legislative District, which includes parts of Huntington Station, Huntington, South Huntington, Dix Hills, Melville, West Hills, Deer Park, North Babylon and West Babylon. He is Vice Chairman of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture committee and a member of the Budget & Finance and Veterans & Seniors committees of the Suffolk County Legislature.